

# ***10 Women:***

## ***Their Poems***

**helen ADAM**

**daisy ALDAN**

**carol BERGE**

**diane DiPRIMA**

**marguerite HARRIS**

**ruth HERSCHBERGER**

**denise LEVERTOV**

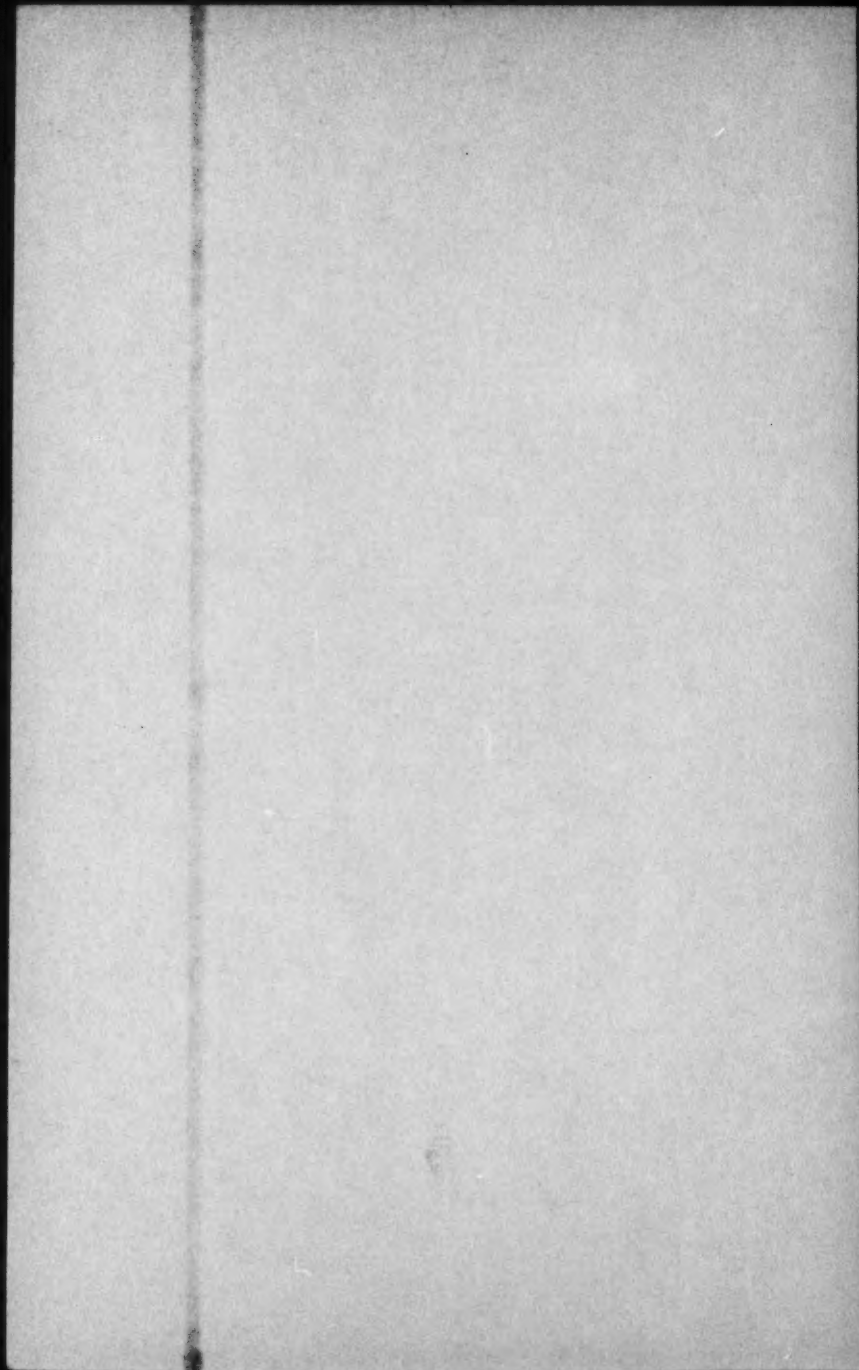
**g c ODEN**

**rochelle OWENS**

**margaret RANDALL**

*edited by CHARLES SHAHOUD MANNA*

**DAMASCUS ROAD**



# ***10 Women:*** ***Their Poems***

*edited by* CHARLES SHAHOUD HANNA

**Damascus Road**

W E S C O S V I L L E  
P E N N S Y L V A N I A

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DENISE LEVERTOV

*A Defeat in the Green Mountains*

On a dull day she goes  
to find the river,  
accompanied by two  
unwilling children, shut in  
among thorns, vines, the  
long grass

stumbling, complaining, the  
blackflies hitting them,  
but persists, drawn  
by river-sound close beyond  
the baffling scratchy thicket

and after a half-hour they emerge  
upon the water

                                  flowing by  
both dark and clear.  
      a space and  
      a movement crossing  
      their halted movement.

But the river is deep

the mud her foot stirs up  
frightens her; the kids are  
scared and angry. No way  
to reach the open fields over there.

Back then:

swamp underfoot, through the  
perverse thickets, finding  
a path finally to the  
main road — defeated,  
to ponder the narrow  
depth of the river,  
its absorbed movement past her.

*At the Justice Department, November 15, 1969*

Brown gas-fog, white  
beneath the streetlamps.  
Cut off on three sides, all space filled  
with our bodies.

Bodies that stumble  
in brown airlessness, whitened  
in light, a mildew glare,  
that stumble  
hand-in-hand, blinded, retching.  
Wanting it, wanting  
to be here, the body believing it's  
dying in its nausea, my head  
clear in its despair, a kind of joy,  
knowing this is by no means death,  
is trivial, an incident, a  
fragile instant. Wanting it, wanting  
with all my hunger this anguish,  
this knowing in the body  
the grim odds we're  
up against, wanting it real.  
Up that bank where gas  
curled in the ivy, dragging each other  
up, strangers, brothers  
and sisters. Nothing  
will do but  
to taste the bitter  
taste. No life  
other, apart from.

## ROCHELLE OWENS

*Poet Rochelle Poet Me*  
*a praise song*

the holy prophet Isaiah  
loves me & all the old  
gods of greece

& Guevera would  
love me if he

ever saw me

Karl Marx grandson of Reb the fat  
would've wanted me  
to flirt

with the butcher for the best  
spleen  
in the West!

Ah! the grape/boycotters want me  
on their posters  
instead

of chains/bunches  
of grapes!

Here I come 'round the corner &

Al Fatah begs me for  
a favor!

Might I be the most beautiful  
guerrilla  
that ever threw

a  
grenade !

But I bow & flash  
an Islamic prayer  
& skip away  
for the love  
of Zion!

I bust up overstuffed middle-class radical's bookstores  
& switch their pictures of Fidel for their true  
heart's desire —

a big banana split !  
Black Revolutionists demand  
that I teach them  
the method of my swagger!

& I jump jump jump away  
the asian continent screams

WHYFORE DOES ROCHELLE  
JUMP SO HIGH !

IS IT BECAUSE OF THE  
BUDDHA  
WHO LOVES HER?

*Dead Bertrand & the Eclipse*

bertrand russell is  
                     dead  
                     & has not eyes  
     alive  
                     to  
                     see the  
                     ec/  
                     lipse eclipse  
     not bare/eyed but  
                     on tele/  
                     vision or else  
     with a slice of  
                     cardboard  
                     bet/wixt  
     the sun & his  
                     orbs  
     old man with a witch's finger  
                     on the moon/  
     his knees sprinkled with  
 piss/ toes like flourescent devil's lips  
                     telling me how  
                     to drink  
     water/ watch out for  
                     dynamite  
                     & winter  
     lyndon johnson &  
                     poisoned beans/  
     who the hell is bertrand!  
                     my father is smarter  
                     & does not  
     have greenish/yellow gas  
                     pouring out  
                     of his nostrils/  
     house of parliament & a  
                     skinny  
                     ass!

*Marcia Sherman ☺ The Panthers*

elephant girl knows  
all the names  
of Panthers  
black Panthers!  
& don't say Huey for Bobby Seale  
she'll correct you  
if you do  
she'll feel happy  
because (pause)  
you don't know  
the difference  
between Fred Hampton & Mao  
wow wow wow  
Susan is working to bring down  
the system  
& has been to Cuba  
didja eveh go to Cuba?  
since the  
Revolution? No?  
Oh  
Susan has been there/ she couldn't do  
much because (pause)  
of feeling tired/ couldn't chop sugar  
cane  
didn't feel well  
& stayed in the Conrad Hilton  
hotel  
if you look into Susan's eyes you know she wants  
to call a cop a pig  
but  
can't!  
i have a hunch that bet/ween first & third  
rounds of a Taiwanese lunch  
Susan screams: OFF OFF OFF THE PIGS

## RUTH HERSCHBERGER

*However: The Author is 100% for Abortion*

Ah the infant child will swim a little space,  
Like a salmon swims against the stream,  
But cannot arrive at its destination, look,  
A tidal wave crushes it from its little roost,  
And sweeps it naked to the teeming world,  
The swarming teeming world, look, a tidal wave  
Sweeps it from its tingling root, and the parrot  
Is lost, in a triumph of medical science, lost  
To the crowing world, lost in a little pile of blood,  
And a soupcon of bones, the infant child, the dragonfish,  
The ecological age declined it.

*Part of a Series of the Two Hundred Poems  
On or Around Mr. P.*

I don't think  
                     I can write —  
                                     love is  
 Approaching —  
                     fear and joy —  
                                     sheer nerve-delight,  
 Anticipating,  
                     hides the words —  
                                     words, the words —  
 What am I saying?  
                     he he  
                                     he phoned —  
 Now.  
             It doesn't matter, yet,  
                                     if he doesn't phone —  
 But if he does,  
                     my stomach  
                                     the rest of the day  
 Turns over and over,  
                                     revolving thoughts —  
 I could live on ambrosia —  
                                     why eat —?  
 My insatiable hunger  
                                     cured  
   by nothing,  
 By everything,  
                     and yet no salacious  
 Dreams  
                     dare file  
                                     in my mind —  
   no —



Only,  
     only, I see  
                 an entire level  
                                 between us  
 Has evaporated —  
                 there seem  
                                 to be no jokes  
   left.

*On a Friend's Anti-Feminist Poem*

Like Whitman  
                 pumping  
                                 hot sperm  
 Into quadrillions  
                 of women (American)  
 So Bill  
         will  
                 from founts of  
 Bountiful love  
                 and fecundity  
                                 ignite passion  
 And fulfillment  
                 in all but  
                                 hysterical canaries.

*Before The Analysis*

What sort of a person will Furst make you?  
 Dream it, dream it, you are not it,  
 That is for certain, you are not that person.  
 Furst, Furst, thou socialist, make me  
 A dreaming perfection of a person,  
 Swimmer, raconteur, polite guest,  
 Charmer of the opposite sex and of the same sex,  
 Actress of some Mark, or at least some Adequacy.  
 A speaker, a voicifier with equanimity,  
 A pauser before striker-of-keys, a door opener  
 Lightly, a faucet-turner of placidity.  
 Doors, doors opening! faucets, faucets running!  
 The whole panoply, the whole panoply,  
 I want to answer my bell in a mood of sobriety.  
 O the spring, O the summer, I want to open the door  
 To Galway in a mood of sobriety, or some such love  
 (Since he will not have me). O go, go, go to Iran  
 Dear Galway and get thee behind me!  
 You torment me, your knee at the Figaro,  
 And your shoulder (I had to touch to get out),  
 And your smile fakely smiling at me (no, not fakely?)  
 O my bile is high, my bile is at high tide,  
 It is not time to do anything but be outrageously  
 Quiet and peaceful; and clean one's room, and wash  
 One's clothes, one after the other, oh I shall  
 Be brave, I shall phone the Vanderlips, I shall  
 Become pure and good and blessed and a swimmer of pools.  
 I shall conquer water, love, art, voice - what else is there.  
 At least, dear Dr. Furst, make my frustrations newer,  
 And a bit different from the mooning frustrations  
 My oral content is acquainted with.  
 Bile, bile, bile, I make a song of my bile,  
 I hide away till my bile doth fade.  
 I closet with my bile and try to excrete  
 The black torrential greenery of it,

Replacing it with spring, a willow yellow  
Now, but later on a dark tulip tree green.

O Galway, why are you so mean?  
When Furst has finished with my faults  
I'll show him yours, and ask  
How I can win you, through your galaxy  
Of cruelty, how I can kiss you  
So the kiss isn't followed by a killing.

*First Walk In The Park*

First walk in the park -  
Even the mingling of carbon monoxide  
Memorable in the spring air -  
The bark of trees stood out - the clouds  
More precise than in years -  
Is this why youth seemed vivid?  
I was wearing my new spectacles.  
The bark of the trees, especially the carved locust -  
Good god - the shades of tan etc. -  
LSD - . I wore green shields too -  
It brightened the green of the willow  
To Devon grass - Actually,  
City park - colors lose something through the misty  
Air of the city - it all looked more normal,  
Healthier, happier, freer with the green shades.  
O I'm looking at the world through grass-colored glasses  
Everything is greening now .  
Spring - the blood still can't move very fast -  
Like winter oil. The joints tire on a walk.  
Could I sit down on the grass and get up?  
A man rolled his tongue in his mouth.  
Finally I saw he was looking at me.  
Something like this used to ruin the rowboats  
For me. Now I finished my coffee,  
Feeling if I wanted to I might hit him  
With a Mrs. Dugan pie.

*A Lover*

My lover is young and has his way,  
And his ways he has.  
No use to kick  
Against the pricks  
For he is sporty and young and gay  
And has great stores of energy,  
Alas.

I could oppose the Barnard girls  
And I could cry.  
With pick and ax  
Could woeful wax  
For he is scant with time and pearls  
For me, as at the world he hurls  
His eye.

But let him run and let him feast  
With lovely fire.  
I'll gain no end  
If I him bend  
By being termagant and beast.  
My only hope is that at least  
He tire.

*In New York City*

We say 'relax', then clutter ourselves with booze  
Until our very brains begin to ooze  
And sentiment seeps over in our lap  
And what we write as iron, reads as pap.  
What then, will coffee resurrect the Muse  
Or shall we be condemned to the Blues?

Irony  
Blarney  
Hootnanney  
I hear a chickadee  
Yea, deep in the city,  
In a Manhattan tree - -  
Ee-ee-ee-ee- -  
Brisk chickadee!  
On Sunday morning  
Over the air conditioners  
You're singing.

The letdown line we learned from Amy Lowell,  
Who well knew how to let the reader drop  
Into supposed profundities of thought- -  
Yet many fell five stories  
And never lived to tell the tale.  
I drop my readers every other line  
And some complain but some protest I'm subtle- -  
You can't please all the hillbillies of rhyme!  
I let my readers drop  
And few survive.

Aiken disliked my 'letting the reader down'  
On an expected rhyme.  
But Aiken props his readers up  
And keeps them there by dipping their feet in lime.

A painter of my acquaintance says that I'm  
A poet of love who's never been in love - -  
I'd say that she's a painter of abstractions  
Whose pointellism's but a cluster of dimes.

Thus we encourage and support  
Our leaky egos - -  
Hate brings us to port  
On olive seas,  
And in our tankers live  
Bright goblins, gremlins, grebes,  
Like chickadees  
Going Ee-ee-ee-ee- -  
Who flutter, feign,  
Then inspiration seize.

## HELEN ADAM

### *Night Nursery Rhyme*

Bells clang low in 'Tom Never's Tower.  
High is the moon. Late is the hour.  
Fallen lax as a hawthorn spray,  
The moon maid lies under flowering may.  
The mirror speaks on Tom Never's wa'.  
"She was the fairest o' them a'."  
The armed man turns where torches pass.  
His mailed fist threatens the weeping glass.  
Over the hills and far away  
The moon doth shine as bright as day.  
A silver whispering fills the air.  
"She was the fairest o' the fair."  
The bells ding fast, and the bells ding slow.  
She moves, a wraith in her robes of snow.  
Through blossoming thorns, sleep scented may,  
Tae the claver o' bells she wafts her way.  
Tom Never! Tom Never! Thy mirror is dark,  
Save far in its depths a fiery spark.  
She hover up, like a deathly flower,  
Tae the window high in the wizard's tower.  
She seeks the window looking on night,  
Beyond the reach o' an eagle's flight.  
The great tower swings wi' an earthquake shock.  
"When the wind blows the cradle will rock."  
The magic egg frae the roof is hung.  
Rock-a-bye baby, roughly swung.  
The egg rays light frae a hundred eyes.  
A light as fierce as its raging cries.  
The red rose laughs and the lilly flower.  
Tom Never laughs in the burning tower,  
His arms out-stretched as he leaps through light  
Tae seize his shadow and clasp it tight.  
The shadow flickers between the wa's.  
The light o' the unborn leaps and fa's.  
Upon the lovers that light is shed  
It fa's and leaps tae the dance they tread.

Rich man, poor man, begger man, thief,  
 Loved alike wi' passion and grief.  
 A' the King's horses bounding and gone.  
 How many miles tae Babylon?

His shadow flames in the man's embrace.  
 The chanting fire is their trysting place.  
 Against the window the woman clings,  
 Spreading her wide, snow weighted, wings.

2

Her palms beat fast on the window pane.  
 The tears on her cheeks like crystal rain.  
 She craves, wi' the dead moon's glum desire,  
 Yon lovers lost in their world o' fire.

"Ride a cock horse!" cries the babe unborn.  
 "Little Boy Blue come blow your horn."  
 As hearts are shaken, that tower doth shake  
 Tae thundering bells that warn "Awake!"

"Awake, or fa' frae the crags o' dream.  
 Awake or dee wi' the cock's first scream."  
 As fades the full moon gazing on day,  
 She fades and pines tae a phantom grey.

Broad and cauld are the fields o' dew.  
 Cauld is the grass her feet lag through.  
 She sinks tae dust mid the hawthorn grove.  
 A trumpet sounds for triumphing love.

The road that runs through the starlit sky,  
 And the riders tae Babylon prancing high.  
 Their horses rear when the trumpet ca's.  
 Pitched frae the ceiling the bairnie fa's.

Gang down, Lord Bothwell, frae Mary's toun.  
 And Paris frae Troy, gang down, gang down.  
 Not while the day star dwines in the west  
 Will peace be found on a woman's breast.

The bells are hushed in the burning tower.  
 The moon lies hid in the hawthorn bower.  
 The mirror whispers, blind on the wa'  
 "She was the fairest o' them a'."



*The Stepmother*

My lord's young daughter in the earth finds rest.  
They laid her doll upon her shrouded breast;  
So the waxen image, with its crown of glass,  
Is the child's companion under churchyard grass.

I had little liking for that silent child,  
With her ways so quiet, and her eyes so wild.  
And the first wife's beauty in her wistful face  
To stir his memories and mock my place.

She had no playmates, and was much alone.  
To secret cruelties I will not own.  
It was only, only that I could not bear  
His smile of pleasure when he called her fair.

This house is older than the old thorn trees.  
Its rooms all echo with the roar of the seas.  
At night, if a child cried, nobody would hear.  
But what should be stirring for a child to fear?

A month of sea mists, and at last, she died.  
He knelt down weeping at the new grave side.  
My words of comfort stammered into air.  
The headstone trembled, and the doll stood there.

My heart beat heavy when its eyes met mine.  
Black eyes shining bitter and malign.  
He lifted up his head when he heard me groan,  
And it darted silently behind the stone.

I looked in my mirror in the evening late.  
A young child dying puts an end to hate.  
The flame of the candle sprang an azure blaze,  
As the mirror tarnished 'neath the doll's dark gaze.

My deep rose garden in the noonday light  
Was balmy refuge from the dreams of night.  
A rose tree shuddering when no wind blew!  
The red leaves fluttered as the doll pushed through.

The feet that follow me are light as air.  
I turn to look, and there is no one there.  
The hands that beckon me are weak and small,  
Yet hold me helpless in their magic thrall.

My husband's kisses bring me no more joy,  
Our bed so menaced by the sleepless toy.  
It parts the curtains when the moon shines clear.  
Its pygmy shadow is the night I fear.

It parts the curtains of the monstrous bed.  
I never loved her, but she's dead! She's dead!  
She lies in darkness and her woes are done.  
The doll from the deep grave walks in the sun.

A month of sea mists and the end of tears.  
Alas! for me how many months, or years!  
They laid her doll upon her shrouded breast.  
The child lies asleep, but the doll won't rest.

*Anaid si Taerg* (GREAT IS DIANA)

Moondoom! Moondoom! Moondoom!  
Anaid si Taerg. Anaid! Anaid!  
Doom, doom, Moondoom!  
Begone evil moon.  
Run howling from heaven.  
Run howling, panic to Earth.  
Crash to splinters on the polar ice.  
Die strangled in the hair of the north wind.  
Skull riding the sky,  
Empress of dream we deny you.  
Seven times seven  
Times we turn  
Away from your mirror  
Distorted and tarnished.  
Blind light, blow out.  
Now the wings of your elves wither.  
The spears fall  
From the hands of your huntresses.  
Your cats vanish  
Over all the Earth.  
Angel, bland, implacable,  
Reigning serene over agony,  
Wafted through heaven  
By the shrieks of the mad,  
Now cry, now cry, run howling.  
There'll be no more peace in the lunar nights.  
The jets will follow the rocket flights.  
There'll be signs saying "Eat at Eddie's Place"  
On the biggest craters of the full moon's face.  
Guardian of silence, it won't be long  
'Ere you get an earfull of games and song.  
The World's Series will be all relaid.  
And your glaciers tremble to the Hit Parade.  
Moondoom! Moondoom! Moondoom!  
Anaid, Anaid, Ah!

Horns, horns, blow for the moon's mort!  
 Ancient enchantress your nymphs forsake you.  
 The dogs the Tarot will tear you to pieces.  
 The sun's fist shatter your face of grief.

Sing women o' the Earth.  
 Sing down the mune.  
 When a' seas are motionless  
 Then will she droun.

Yon jealous virgin  
 Auld in heaven serene,  
 Spying on Earth's lovers  
 Wi' avid een.

Forge me a black dirk  
 Tae fling at the sky.  
 Weave me a spider's web  
 That will float sae high

Sing women o' the Earth.  
 Sing doun the mune.  
 Sisters she's bound tae fa'  
 Sudden and sune.

His lane let the lordly sun  
 In the heavens move,  
 Till not a heart on Earth  
 Remember Love.

Frae every breaking wave  
 Her wierd we'll dree.  
 Droun, droun the goddess  
 In her ain siller sea.

Never tae lure agin  
 The unborn tae the breast.  
 Then shall a' women laugh  
 And the seas rest.

And there shall be no more moonlight.  
 And there shall be no more moonlight.  
 And there shall be no more opposites  
 Over all the Earth.

## MARGUERITE HARRIS

### *Small Town Band*

Summer's crock, designed to hole  
sweet bloom-and-berry balm, spills out  
a neigh and chatter of chores  
jarring the bay's tense blue.

All outdoors anthems barbecue and  
festival.        Envy of Schoenberg  
the darting jays now unloose  
shake down on us whole apronsful  
of cacophonous song. Grace notes  
ripple skim the high hedge  
multiply and soar to outdinning  
ultimate joy, like Charles Ives'  
small town Sunday band, each man  
in his own key, to his own drum.

*these things and more*

(*d. a. levy*: 1945 - 1968)

was it the getting busted  
the bail the bookshop closing  
leaving him holding the whole  
bag of Cleveland O

afraid he was growing old  
wasn't living his poems  
(the drawings were pure haiku)  
of the one small straw we  
couldn't see turned him off?

we knew he hated the fuzz  
(power corrupts) phonies and  
the stink of the system yet  
with love spit and his own

bread *he* printed *our* poems  
setting us up... 'I depend  
on the charity of my friends  
as they do upon mine' (the trust  
one dies for the want of

surmise is a game but  
isn't it clear he'd been  
sending up signals a long  
time before he let go  
that we missed our cue?

yes it was something small  
like having a Big World  
Dream blow up in his face  
not worth the bother

and too beat to go on or  
that he felt alone  
like ancient Po Chu-i  
'alone for a thousand years'

*Moon:*

listless  
between twin towers  
at the park's end -  
pale ghost of  
Albert Ryder  
's vigorous moon  
climbing climbing  
my tall canvas

the tide  
your hireling  
lashes the meek sea  
to wildness  
wrecking  
the small craft

(what name  
in the hold?

white globe  
frosting the pine -  
woods and the dark  
quarry (the wings where  
you wait  
to be wheeled on  
again - your night-  
ly cosmic turn

man-in-the-moon  
of my father's  
5 cent cigar band -  
my ring-finger  
twitches  
as I touch the sweet  
ash of those  
aromatic days

*Pirouette*

Poet of young despair,  
riding the bongo drums  
to that heaven of oblivion,  
the lost self,

the only heaven where  
the birds, beasts and flowers  
one meets  
are pleasurable

in rare  
and delicious landscape  
of tapering thighs  
and biceps,—

shall I  
thin-lipped, disdain  
your pirouette,  
when only yesterday  
(and the world still plain)  
my kind,  
straddling a war  
got lost  
got hot

to sweet fiddles  
and sax,  
leaping and gyring  
in a turkey trot?

Girl, high-riding  
your rubious dream,  
out of a dusty heart  
I tell

how time wears us down  
how from all voyaging  
we must return

how the interminable shuttling  
loosens the spleen,  
stiffens the spine.



*old tune*

red cloth for courage  
covers old flesh  
diamonds my gear  
I'm naked without  
it's an old tune  
dollars rake ashes  
alleyways yawn  
no children suck my  
vomit is love  
it's an old tune  
words poke their thumbs  
up a dry spigot  
spiders for friends  
clog up the hold  
it's an old tune  
crowing in bars  
makes the clock stop  
belly be warm you  
there your hate  
. . . old tune

*('dissonance, if you are  
interested, leads to discovery.')*  
Wm. C. Williams

*drill*

passing between them  
relentless  
first one  
then the other  
taking turns

they press on  
with ardor  
through red lights

down down  
to the bedrock  
of dissonance,  
disparity's core,  
where they find

that to salvage a  
delicate base  
they must backtrack  
a good part  
of the way

first one  
then the other  
slowly slowly  
taking turns . . .

## MARGARET RANDALL

### *Everyone Comes to a Lighted House*

Last night I had a dream in which  
with my own hands I picked up fat fresh mushrooms  
and sliced them into a frying pan.  
I watched them shrink and brown  
and tasted the delicate meat drippings, fat,  
and the thin browned mushroom slices  
together in gravy.

My dream.

The first one, the first moment I've had  
in which mushrooms didn't feel terror in my body.  
In the same dream there was a funeral parlor,  
dark hallways, a family,  
prominently a son. Showing us the way.  
High fences at night.

Gates in the fences, made of the same wire.  
Gregory, Sarah, Ximena, Anna, Robert and I  
walking as fast as we could, not running but walking  
through the gates, from gate to gate,  
along the fences, through the night  
away from the funeral parlor towards  
a lighted house.

The faint smell of the mushroom gravy brought us  
to the kitchen.

I have been three months in Cuba  
from the year of decisive effort to the year of ten  
million tons,  
from effort to sugar,

economy,  
people moving together and if you don't move you're  
out, away, somewhere else.

Fidel's "Within the Revolution everything; outside  
the Revolution nothing"

isn't the private property of intellectuals.

It's just like breathing.

Everyone comes to the party.

Imperial humor dried up, lost:

"What if they gave a war and no one came?"

Just it always being very simple, my Vietnamese  
friend who said

"Before the Americans it was the French for 100 years  
and before that

the Chinese for a thousand. And now the Americans.  
We *know* what slavery is."

Very simple and all the time,

people moving together.

I'm moving.

I look at the worried letter from my friend in the States.

I try to read it.

But I'm moving.

Out of my dream.

*Waiting With You*

— for Robert, towards the end of a pregnancy . . .

I love you.

That the first line of this poem, like your last, Period.  
And all the fear that comes from that, and the no-fear  
heavy, into my eyes.

I hate all my old poems I hate all the books, want to  
look away

as you turn the pages.

**I love you.**

No fucking no work no salt no face to the sun the  
doctor says

such a little deprivation beside our brothers and sisters  
but when you go I quickly put the Internationale on the  
record player

to lift my body, remembering  
that high window in Havana . . .

And now the other revolutionary songs on the record are like

German boots sinking across my bed.

I love you.

The baby rolls, pushes against the skin of my belly,  
your baby,

our baby will come when he will.

Like our oldest son coming to see us make love  
or the tears of our daughters

your ear to the heartbeat your hand between my legs.

A time to crown this waiting.

**A time to look the oldest son in the eyes.**

## A time to place all this

real as the song, the window, the old poems,  
My discovering

**I believe you.**

New Year's Eve, 1969/1970:

What I should have said is  
these are my needs  
and I want you to meet them.  
What I say is if you know what my needs are  
it's easy to say go out and meet them.  
It's harder to meet them yourself.  
Instead of talking about hang ups and liberation  
and other made to order cliches  
think of how you feel when you need  
and I'm gone.

Being dependent is replacing part of myself with you.

I've got my whole self  
and I want to use it/me. Sometimes, with you.

DAISY ALDAN

*In a Perpetual Dusk*

In a perpetual  
    dusk cumulous wings of smog  
        reeking of sulphur and charred hearts  
        writhe in obligato hover  
    through the phantom of your strained  
face etched with tombstone crags  
of the shattered mirrors  
    of my house wherein your stark  
        eyes are grotesquely multiplied  
    No wind shakes free the dead branches  
    of this cemetery where  
uselessly I water  
rusty metal flowers  
    you have planted Once again  
        I begin the long crawl uphill  
        who believed forever vanquished  
    the albatross of despair  
seeking resurrection  
on the opposite side  
    of the canvas of the green  
        crucified flesh and the smashed feet  
        Bowed beneath transformed illusion  
    strangled by grey gravity

the heart dessicated  
 what use to know Light IS?  
     Come distilled gold dust flow through  
         the ventricles and auricles  
         through my skull may an aura rise  
     dissolve as salt in water  
 these dense vapors shaking  
 tree skeletons to bud  
     piercing the fear-hardened soil  
         to flower Come butterflies, birds  
     A clear breeze The trees speak I hear  
     as if under water curved  
 chords of the Angelus

. . . . .

*Voyeur*

lifting grey satin draperies the glacier  
 in silk chiffon unveiled herse . I, voyeur,  
 breathless anticipating the revelation  
 of her nudity in the unfurling sunlight.

sparkling she laughed dazzling flashes from her flirting eyes.  
 arms, hands, in gesture of generous grace  
 she intoned blue arpeggios and prolonged ah's.  
 I answered a laugh of renewal leaning in love.

she drew the curtain of chiffon. I turned.  
 when I re-turned drawn was the opaque tapestry.  
 had I dreamed so honest and luminous a nudity?  
 O evanescent revelation that transforms!



from **BREAKTHROUGH**

1.

## "The Wave"

the wave is confronted by moon-light or  
by light sun-  
they meet  
in my eye  
my I weaves the dark  
waters and gold  
the dark  
waters and running quicksilver  
in light of  
my thinking  
whose  
Word calls  
their Name  
Man  
must reveal the wave for  
the sake of  
the wave for  
the sake of  
Man

2.

## "Mercurial Pitching Sunbeams"

mercurial  
pitching  
sunbeams  
emerge as gulls  
grouped by the wind  
— how do fragile  
wings  
endure the wind's  
thrust ?

3.

## "Glaciers"

glaciers thrust  
themselves into air  
waters  
thrust  
themselves over rocks  
clouds  
those bodies  
of  
Angels whirl up  
over snow-peaks  
I have no fear  
here  
in heights among these  
ancient rocks  
the eagles circle  
I have more  
fear on  
the beaches

4.

## "We Walk"

we  
walk across fields of  
wild flowers meditating  
on  
what is to be revered  
campanules rise from grey  
rock chalices  
facing earth — moon —  
flowers

we bend far  
back — try  
to realize stars are  
spirit  
beings and  
so are  
we  
O in the dark you are facing me  
and so  
is HE

5.

"Transmutation"

transmutation of glacial ice  
(Sun)  
dense river careening  
down mountains in vortices  
refining itself  
meets  
rocks needs them  
(collision)  
rises in undulating veils of mists  
toward spray droplets  
gold dust  
immateriality

Equation:

leaden ice/Sun (equal) water  
 water x rocks (plus) the  
 extent of the calamity (equal)  
 the degree of refinement  
 to gold  
 dust

in the  
 immaterial  
 interim the alchemy  
 is  
 inscribed.

6.

# "A Careening of Rivers"

seek a careening of rivers  
 which pause in  
 among ice-blue lakes  
 glaciers  
 glide then  
 toward the 4  
 seas  
 (where hills curve  
 carved with ancient monkey-gods)  
 at certain turnings 4 rivers  
 convene — divide  
 and meet  
 —cross  
 at Crossing  
 clarity.  
 rivers utter the same  
 sounds we can.

*No Longer*

No  
longer  
does the gla-  
cier I kneel before  
which has ceased purifying  
me, disguise my hunger for you even  
to myself. My dreams track you across vast  
fields of non-atmospheric sleep; a soundless echo  
hovers, calling for your face. No, my eyes will never  
be free of tears. And as I touch the white, pristine,  
glacial objectivity I implore, my fingers sink  
in grey dissolving dust; - like Rosetti in  
the London graveyard with a candle,  
salvaging his stained poems  
from beneath the face  
of his dead  
bride

*I Awake in These Hills*

I awake into the breathing breast of memory  
where I flow, mercury blue: the eloquent  
arrested streams mineralizing  
engraved in the crags: you mineralizing  
scars into my becoming. After the faltering

earthquake, trying to re-arrange, tranquility  
into the footsteps of presence: this quicksilver,  
thunder, altering to granite:

Yesterday, lightning in the fragrance of linden  
too quick for focus:

Your voice — "Kein Abschiedskummer!"

I was dying into your receding on the path  
of dark spruce and roses: you revolving among  
the train wheels: Echo of a wail across  
the puzzling continent of you. Here, the wound  
of your face wavering on the rocks.

## DIANE DI PRIMA

### *Route 101*

*(for Eldridge, on the eve of his departure)*

1.

fruit stand closed, dry stubble cut slantwise  
prickly in field, apple trees bare, one with a ladder  
still leaning against it,  
robot men twelve feet high, a whole electric  
installation marches the bare brown hills, they  
close around me, soft, a trap, I read  
that Vosnesensky visited Picasso, wonder  
if I would be happier or more at home  
in Europe, I am riding  
200 miles in a bumpy bus to hear an old German  
prate about Tibet

2.

could I do zazen in Europe? sit  
with empty mind amid fragments of old statues?  
better this land's end, peninsula looking west  
which is East, gold country  
to the north, sheep ranches east, the south  
a mess of insecticides, tract housing, cold wind  
from Japan thru the city of San Francisco:  
spanish churches, italian churches, large black swathe  
the Fillmore, cuts thru the middle, we strut  
parade, sit zazen, eat sashimi, our lives  
getting slant-eyed & yellow  
WOULD THE TWELVE PEOPLE I DON'T KNOW  
who don't know each other  
GET OUT OF MY KITCHEN  
perhaps they would like to meet, form a commune  
migrate to Oregon, or the Netherlands

3.

we flee from lair to vanishing lair, like foxes  
like hunted hare in the sagebrush, "entrenched retreats"  
we call them, seeking to dignify  
our frantic clutch on some kind of life, a shadow  
brown and elusive as shrunken babies' heads  
in the hands of the mad tribes of Ecuador  
restored to seedform



4.

this, then is what is left us: life  
 retreats into itself, spores  
 floating on the aether, seek a world.  
 five hours into the mountains, the icy streams  
 are clean, Zen students walk  
 in robes, the buck deer leaps,  
 five hours into the city, a black man walks  
 he will not return to prison, will not wait  
 the Man, his gun & woman ready, his dilemma  
 eternally ours

— — — — —

So much of space between us two  
 We kiss the planets when we kiss  
 No closeness ever shuts this out  
 So much of space between us two  
 We kiss the planets when we kiss  
 And all the aether knows your hand  
 And dust from Saturn foils my tongue  
 So much black light caresses us  
 No closeness ever shuts this out  
 But mouth from shoulder, thigh from thigh  
 Explosive air unwinds our love  
 So distance holds, so love is safe

*April Poem*

The perfect days are following, one right after the other  
 The fields are turning green, there is no green as yet on  
 the trees

The children run loose in the fields, they shout,  
 no one tells them not to  
 Our visitors are from the city, or from New Jersey  
 They bring peace and buddhism from the lamasery  
 They bring cottage cheese from the supermarket, which  
 no one here eats

They speak of impending trials of Dr. Leary  
 They speak of the war we are waging, tho no one calls  
 it that  
 I am pale from the indoors, the sun strikes my study at  
 sundown

It strikes my T-square, and a Buddha on the wall  
 A postcard Buddha, and the jewels on my windowsill

Most of my friends still drink they still eat meat  
 They will not come to visit me where we are hiding

There is a road that curls behind our house  
 I walk on it a lot, I watch the birds  
 fly low across it  
 The moss is green on the rocks, occasional houses  
 grey & unpainted, occasional dogs bark at me  
 The birds fly low thru the fields they settle down  
 on the cut, dried stalks of last summer's corn:  
 No one is planting yet, tho the rains have stopped.

The postcards I pasted up, on the wall in the hall  
march uphill in a straight line, astigmatism  
or just plain crookedness have placed them so

And there is a tree dropping some long kind of seedpod  
all over somebody else's lawn out there  
It's weird, it writhes, it looks like the trees  
on Hollowe'en greeting cards with witches behind them

HOW MANY TIMES CAN THEY SLAM  
THE FRONT DOOR LIKE THAT ?

How many times can they keep going in and out?  
I fantasize sudden and drastic ends for them  
Send them off to the PureLand Paradise, where they can  
go on ringing the front doorbell eternally  
among the innumerable imperturbable Boddhisattvas...

*The Divorce*

The Burnable Garbage and the Unburnable Garbage  
are getting mixed up

The children are tearing up paper bags

I have gone off the macrobiotic diet to the extent  
of drinking

(o evil) a glass of hot milk

I feel like an alcoholic on a binge

It is April, the sky has changed color, but the air  
is still too cold

*April 24, 1968: For John*

you sleep in this tower room, your long hair  
falls over your face, I stand over you, look out the window  
at the city falling away beneath you, you lie  
curled on the couch, in this tower room, your bright hair  
proud and delicate as a flower, has not been cut  
in the San Mateo County jail, I stand over you  
breathing softly, watching you sleep and my breath is  
a prayer of thanks, light is fading  
over the city, cycle, a car radio, go by noisily,  
you do not stir  
you who so often, so lightly sleep, starting up  
at a step or word, you sleep, curled up  
on the couch in this tower room, and I am proud  
and filled with unholy joy at the sight of your hair,  
your trusting  
childlike breathing, your good deep sleep  
we have slipped thru their fingers, we rest, next time  
might not be so easy

G C ODEN

*Petition*

I love you for your passion;  
for your body's beautiful hunger;  
for its crimson bush of our burning.

I need you for your passion;  
for its sweet consensual surgery;  
for its bounty of mercy that saves.

I want you for your passion.  
For your refinement of love  
— word into deed as bread into body —  
I consecrate myself  
— candlemaesse to the bone —  
and bid your bright hands to  
fellowship.

*The Bowery*

is where I come  
among men  
contending with  
old devotions  
as have left me  
altar-bound.

Up, down the avenue,  
shifting fixed loss,  
they move within their dreams;  
emotion by memory confounded.

Spent —  
like waves undone  
from lost campaigns  
for shore;  
land-lost —  
like ships the sea  
has shelved;  
their impoverished selves  
they saturate with sun,  
bereft of other comforting.

Night falls and  
gaudy lights monopolize.  
But in that preceding dusk  
singly closeting  
as sleep likewise honeycombs,  
that face, those eyes,  
divinity as love supposes,  
vapors like April welling  
in the morning breath  
of March;  
then disassembling,  
falls away as water  
breaking summit rest  
unpetals  
earthward bound from air.

Subsequently, feet begin  
their syntax of raw unrest,  
in valedictory returning  
to old stations of decay  
where hope does not break through  
nor time improve faith,  
and self-preserving night  
steamrollers on.

*The Triple Mirror*

What did you think when first  
as a child  
you met yourself in vanity's mirror  
subdivided by three?

Id, ego, superego,  
did you fathom their names?  
Or didn't your trinity matter?

Leafed in the glass like pressed clover;  
stared at with awe equal to your own;  
the burgeoning godhead of your imperfection;  
how did you impress you?

I remember I laughed;  
delightedly hiding and seeking,  
teasing from depths of unknowing  
my triple declension,  
peer more than, then, I suspected.

Self awareness takes time.  
I have had it. Now in  
life's looking glass,  
when wrung round by  
three-person me, I bow.  
My familiars, they nod.  
Silence the even exchange of  
the guilty



*The Bond*

The fear I fight is me —  
that rabbit self propelled  
to snow cover in the crowd  
rather than take its place  
upon the cross either to  
the left or right  
of love.

It seems I have always  
feared to be.  
Nevertheless,  
I pursue myself,  
a timid huntsman of  
integrity, of animal truth  
that might burst forth  
from the dendrite's foresty shrubbery  
where in facile shapes  
wind and darkness conspire.

All one can offer to another  
is his courage. First,  
however, he must have it.  
I am no visionary  
My stripes speak of contest.  
Linked in yours,  
these slight hands but serve  
the fellowship I prize, and  
to its honor I am bound  
by you.

*The Clearing*

We have won  
through the woods  
into this climax  
of light that ripens  
the wheat of your hair,  
and floods your eyes  
with the cornflower blue  
of the field.

We have left  
the dark and the cold.  
Sun bursts overhead;  
with the motions of  
water we tell it  
our joy.

To each other,  
certainly,  
we have come.  
Our separate deaths at noon  
the journey.  
Seeking only to be made free,  
we have made ourselves  
whole.

*The Riven Quarry*

In my dry cell  
of love's heat  
here, in May,  
in lover's weather,  
I hunch over these words,  
shaping them to the image of  
my hunger, clothing them  
in the many-colored robes  
woven upon the loom of  
your absence.

Scarlet and summer-yellow,  
with jungle excess, vivid  
appetites of love hob  
the green grounds of my  
anxiety; and I observe  
myself the riven quarry  
of lust, the red demon.

I would not have it other.  
Let me not run to  
beauty on timid feet;  
but in whatever error  
my journeying may prove to be,  
arrive forwardly as  
sea exposing itself to  
the high-ribbed attractions of  
shore. Love that cannot  
shoulder its own torment  
forfeits the name. Or so  
I voice to myself  
voyaging these Saharas  
between our contract,  
wolves sharp-eyed at the  
heels of spirit.

CAROL BERGE

*Nature Lecture*

The fitch moves close to the ground  
and humorlessly. Like a movie of itself,  
honor-bound not to divulge the ending.  
You know how it is! the need  
for secrecy. Path worn where no other paths  
go; those claws, the cast of eye  
backward, into limbo, or forward, into  
madness. Once we thought the fitch  
was a kind of weasel. Any way it moves,  
colors confront it, images of past  
lovers and children. It meets no pattern.

The fitch moves, Slowly, slowly,  
a motion picture of itself. Or resembling  
this picture in our guidebook.  
As an unfunny comic strip: from the ears  
sprout bubbles, you know the need  
for messages! thumpings or spoor.

An odd ethic: not to reveal  
even to itself/ that which claws in sharply  
or moves, grindingly, as for food.  
In that terrible lair/ rest the soft bones  
of unnameable offspring or animals  
arranged in patterns on the earth floor.  
This fitch takes itself quite seriously  
knows some forms as native  
and others as acquired arts. See the eye  
developing in upon itself, as years  
pass quickly and no blood is exchanged.

The fitch moves. But its slow sound  
is always the same, is  
a sound track of itself, played and played.  
We have to pause, book open,  
to check its conformations/ to be sure  
it is indeed a fitch, and this year.

Not that there is anything amiss in nature  
if an animal is the same  
year after year, maintaining  
the same steady slowness, or the same sound.

It simply *feels* wrong. And it is by this, after all, that we are able to identify it, for our collection. We note it does not go too fast for eye to follow, like the ocelot. Yet somehow this fitch is uncharacteristic, even of itself. We are not used to this, a known animal having unknown manners, a slow animal being unpredictable and therefore treacherous (*not* that we think of one for a house-pet!)

When we least expect, it turns the mad eye toward us, leaps and clutches; the book goes flying, our slide-projector spins and breaks against a rock. But then the fitch moves slowly away. We can retrieve the book, torn at that page, shut it firmly, and move fast down the path, utterly disgusted.

*A Trip With The Ordinary People*

From the neck up only, and it's  
nothing but all this commotion.  
"I guess it's closed by now. . ."  
"Wouldn' chew?" Stand waiting  
for a lift to the seashore,  
in a brown-white striped dress  
with matching coat and husband.  
He leans his arm across her  
(Nice ass you got sweet baby)  
and they both smile. We knew  
before she touched his neck  
how it is for them. When their  
lift arrives, he playfully  
pokes at it with his own stick  
She regally supervises the load-  
ing of their small possessions.  
But carries in her sharp hand  
an elegant red-lacquered box.  
His red-figured tie helps her  
into the car, in the leaving.  
Surprisingly, he is the driver.



HELEN ADAM was born in Scotland, but has lived in America (SF & NYC) for the past 4 decades. "I was brought up on the old Scottish ballads and the oral tradition of chanting them aloud." In addition to her book, *Ballads*, she has co-authored a ballad opera, *San Francisco's Burning*, which was produced by the Judson Poets' Theatre.

DAISY ALDAN is editor of Folder Editions and has recieved poetry awards from the Poetry Forum and the Rochester Poetry Festival. Her latest books include *Of Arrows and Vectors*, *Poems from India*, and a translation of the Swiss poet, Albert Steffen. The 6 *Breakthrough* poems that appear in this book are from a group which forms a book of 30 poems. The essence of the poems "lies in the spaces-silences and pauses, and this essence is meant to be meditation."

CAROL BERGE is a member of the NY State Council on Arts' Poets and Writers Program. Her latest book is *From a Soft Angle: Poems About Women*. She is currently working on a second novel, "more interested in prose as a basic form of communication, though there are things to say which can, it seems, only be said in poetry."

DIANE DI PRIMA edited, with LeRoi Jones, the *Floating Bear*. Also a cofounder of the Poets' Press and NY Poets' Theatre. Mother of 5, she lives in San Francisco and, "just writing and living catch as catch can, working on past 10 years' manuscripts, learning to sit zazen, studying herbs & healing (also Sanskrit), while waiting whatever cataclysms lurk in the 70's."

MARGUERITE HARRIS is the link of 2 adjoining generations, dug by each. Edited *Emily Dickenson: Letters From the World*. She lives in NYC where she has received the Edwin Markham Award from the Poetry Society of America. Her books include *A Reconciling of Rivers* and *The Risk of the Vine*. She marched in the first suffragette parade, "It was Lawrence who clawed away our bars - let us make him a deep salaam. He carved out his environment, as all poets must do - chiding us the while 'What is it you Do but wont SAY?' "

RUTH HERSCHBERGER was born in the Middle West (Chicago) and now lives in NYC, by way of Black Mt. College (N.C.). She is featured in Modern Library's *A New Anthology of Modern Poets* and has received the Society of Midland Authors Poetry Award for her book, *Nature & Love Poems*.

DENISE LEVERTOV was born in England, but has been living in America since 1948. "I think it was very beneficial for me to come to America at a time when American poetry was in a very live period. . . I feel that I am genuinely of both places, and that has simply extended my usage. I'm glad to have a foot in more than one culture." (NYQ) She has received a National Book Award nomination as well as a Guggenheim fellowship and is currently teaching poetry at MIT. Her latest book is *To Stay Alive*.

G C Oden was a long time resident of NYC's East Side where she worked for a Madison Avenue publisher until she finally made a break and went to Maryland to teach poetry at the U of Md. A visual interpretation of her poetry (16mm film) has been made by Media Plus, Inc.

ROCHELLE OWENS' verse play, *Futz*, was made into a full length film after it had won an Obie Best Play Award. Her books include *Not Be Essence that Cannot Be* and *Salt and Core*. "An unliberated woman is just another dummy person. Her *raison d'être* need be excellento raisons in a loaf of cynammon bread. Let the first grenade be pure silk! Down with all korny names from Susan to Gladys! And sometimes we do not win."

MARGARET RANDALL left NYC in the early 60's and now lives in Havana with her husband and 4 children. She was the editor of *el corno emplumado* (Mexico City) and is now working at the Cuban Book Institute, "writing a book on women in the Cuban Revolution, watching and learning from the revolution growing inside my children, also a 500 page 'diary/autobiography/thing.' "

